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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3818th meeting of the Security Council, held on 18 September 1997 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Croatia", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council expresses its deep concern at the lack of substantial progress by the Government of the Republic of Croatia in fulfilling the conditions and tasks that are key to the transfer of executive authority to the Republic of Croatia in the territories of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium, as noted in its resolution 1120 (1997) and the 23 June 1997 report of the Secretary-General (S/1997/487).

"In this regard, the Security Council calls upon the Croatian Government to meet its obligations and commitments and to take immediate action in the following areas: to remove all administrative and legal obstacles to the two-way return of all displaced persons as well as to the return of refugees; to ensure security and social and economic opportunity including property rights for all returnees; to take effective measures to prevent harassment of returnees; to implement measures to establish effective local government administrations; to ensure the regular payment of benefits to all pension and welfare recipients and open Croatian pension offices in the region; to ensure further economic reintegration; to initiate a country-wide public programme of national reconciliation and curb media attacks on ethnic groups; and to implement fully and fairly the amnesty law and cooperate fully with the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. In this context, the Security Council notes the recent information provided by the Croatian Government on intended steps to address some of these issues and urges the Croatian Government to implement these steps without delay.

"The Security Council emphasizes that the prompt completion of the tasks outlined above, as well as the fulfilment by the Croatian Government of its obligations under the Basic Agreement (S/1995/951), the agreements

between the Croatian Government and the United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium (UNTAES), as well as the letter of the Croatian Government of 13 January 1997 (S/1997/27, annex), will determine the pace of further devolution of executive authority for the civil administration to the Croatian Government as well as further Council action. The Council urges all parties to cooperate fully with UNTAES and looks forward to the report of the Secretary-General due no later than 6 October 1997, as requested in its resolution 1120 (1997)."